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ART. VII. — *Village and Farm Cottages. The Requirements of American Village Homes, considered and suggested, with Designs for such Houses, of Moderate Cost.* By HENRY W. CLEAVELAND, WILLIAM BACKUS, and SAMUEL D. BACKUS. New York : D. Appleton & Co. 1856.

THE study of the outward forms of nature, with reference to the improvement of landscape, is a modern exercise of the taste, and the result of a civilization not attained by any of the ancients. The Greeks and Romans had their architecture, their sculpture, and their painting; they could fully appreciate the beauty and the grandeur of art; but we have little proof that they felt as we do the full influence of nature. In the progress of the human mind, the power of appreciating art seems to precede the development of that sentiment which causes one to be delighted with the contemplation of real landscape. The majority of men can feel and understand the value of paintings, without any poetic sensibility or any extraordinary mental cultivation. Even a fine landscape painting affords delight to many who would look with indifference upon the scene represented.

It may be remarked, however, that in the case of pictures the spectator's vision is assisted by the genius of the artist, who not only circumscribes the view, but selects such objects, and places them in such harmonious relations to one another, that one whose imagination is too dull to feel the influence of the same scene in nature, is with these aids enabled both to feel and to admire. But the apparent love of paintings, and of other productions of the fine arts, is often the mere affectation of persons who wish to be in fashion. Paintings have in all ages been fashionable, because they are costly; Nature has always been unfashionable, because she is cheap. When one has become the possessor of a fine picture, his ambition tempts him to study its beauties, and to exalt it by his praises in the opinion of others. But let a man become the possessor of a beautiful landscape, under the open heavens, if his sense of its beauty or his ambition had tempted him to speak its praises, the crowd both of rich and poor, in a

former and not very remote period, would have laughed at him, unless he could make it plain to their minds that it had cost him a large sum of money. On this account the proprietor of a domain could have used no other means of making it contribute to his pride, except to embellish it with works of art, which should render its costliness self-evident to the untutored.

These remarks may be illustrated by facts in the history of gardening, which in former times consisted in the blending of artificial and natural objects in such a manner as to make Nature look as much as possible unlike herself. He who was the owner of a palace or a mansion, and wished to enjoy the advantages of a garden, sought in the decoration of it only to gratify his pride. The ruling idea that occupied his mind was to exhibit a work that should elevate him above the multitude. For the creation of the several objects connected with it, architecture was of the first importance; sculpture afforded assistance in the second degree; and lastly, the trees, shrubs, and flowers were valuable chiefly as they admitted of an arrangement evincing that great wealth alone could have accomplished the whole work. In the construction of the several objects in our rural cemeteries, we observe, in the present period of progress, the same preference of the works of art over nature. The majority ruthlessly destroy all that is most pleasing among the native beauties of the place, to make room for a fashionable iron fence and a showy marble monument. Even here ambition rules at the expense of every tender affection, and every sentiment whether romantic or holy.

We find in some of the ancient poets descriptions clearly showing that they looked upon the face of nature as we look upon it now. This evidence abounds in the writings of the Hebrew prophets, in Virgil and Lucretius, and in some of the Greek poets; but it never occurred to one of the ancients to make terrestrial scenery the sole theme of a poem, and in their allusions to natural objects they referred rather to their sensual than to their picturesque or poetical charms. Neither did the ancients ever assume nature as a model in their attempts to improve the appearance of landscape. The study

of scenery, with the idea of making it more beautiful or picturesque, seems to have been suggested by the modern art of landscape-painting; and it was fostered by the perusal of modern romances, which abound in glowing descriptions of nature, that greatly transcend anything of a similar kind in ancient literature. Though at the commencement of this revolution in taste the purpose of the reformers was to make the garden a copy of nature, this was soon found to be an impracticable attempt, which resulted, in many instances, in injuring the appropriate features of the garden. One of the beneficial consequences of the movement was to banish some of the absurdities that prevailed in the old style, and to substitute greater simplicity. The attempt to extend many of the true features of the garden into the landscape outside of it was found likewise to be more or less offensive; but it led to the study of the sources of beauty in landscape, and taught men, by a variety of experiments, how far Nature might be adorned without spoiling her original charms.

At length the topiary art was banished; the enormities of the Dutch garden were driven out; peacocks and lions in box and yew were slain, and the prevailing system of laying out grounds—that of straight lines and right angles—gave place to one of irregular lines and figures. This mode was still further improved by one of more graceful forms and serpentine walks. The avenue was superseded by the belt, and straight hedge-rows were broken into clumps. Everything was still formal, but more graceful than the old style. These improvements soon became general; for men were tired of seeing all gardens the exact patterns of one another, and were prepared to be pleased with any deviation from this tiresome uniformity. It was a leading doctrine of the new school that nature, not geometry, was to be studied by the ornamental gardener; and the whole community of landed proprietors became possessed of a mania for the “natural,” or more properly the *irregular*, style of laying out grounds.

It was soon perceived, however, that the public was chasing an *ignis fatuus*; that the improvers were doing mischief by the wanton and merciless destruction of old gardens and

avenues, which were valuable as remnants of antiquity; that the new style was not what it professed to be, an imitation of nature, but the substitution of a new for an old formalism; that it was extending the gardener's operations beyond his province, and covering all the country with artificial landscapes resembling parterres. It had reformed the garden, but it was spoiling nature, by the destruction of all picturesque appearances, and putting in their places stately gravel-walks, circular clumps, and other objects suggestive of affectation and pretence. Yet these operations were the germ of the idea of improving landscape, and have issued in the development of a new science, which it is our present purpose to examine.

It is evident that in all matters of taste there has always been a struggle between fashion and the love of display on the one hand, and genius and the love of nature on the other. This is no more true of the art of improving landscape, than of poetry, painting, and all the fine arts. The revolution in the style of gardening was first suggested by the writings of men who, being endowed with genius and sensibility, were led to believe that the secret of deriving the greatest amount of pleasure from a garden was to make it resemble nature as much as possible consistently with its purposes, to introduce no artificial objects for mere ornament, and in all mechanical operations to work in such a manner as that the method of art should not be detected. But the simplifying of the garden was unsatisfactory to the ambition of land-owners, and they made themselves compensation by dressing Nature, and stamping all their domains with the monotonous impress of art. Some of the best writers on this subject have condemned this entire system of improvements; and the question still remains unanswered, how far the practice of dressing Nature may be carried, without injury to her features, or to the expression of her original scenes. In all attempts of this kind we perceive the difficulty of escaping the requisitions of wealth and fashion, which demand that all their possessions shall be stamped with the evidence of cost. The sensibility, which is the foundation of true taste, can never belong to minds cast in an ordinary mould. These must always be the slaves of fashion, and follow in the wake of distinguished examples.

It is the part of genius to guide and direct those who have sufficient power and influence to form the public taste, and thus to bring about improvements in the arts, as in other cases it has introduced improvements in morals and in social life.

The united efforts of the different writers on landscape have gradually developed certain principles, that need only proper arrangement and classification to be expanded into a science. Any one who will study these authors for the purpose of obtaining general views, will see that their prevailing aim is to show in what manner the work of art may be combined with that of nature, so as to produce the most agreeable influence on the mind. Operations to this end must be founded on the observation of nature, a knowledge of the general principles of the fine arts, and the power of tracing all agreeable and disagreeable effects to the mind, by a careful analysis of its feelings, prejudices, and associations. The improvement of landscape, then, is no part of the gardening art,—not even an extension of it; it includes *gardening* only as it includes *architecture*, *dendrology*, *monumental sculpture*, and some other arts as subsidiaries.

The term *landscape gardening*, which is commonly applied to this science, is plainly a misnomer, and has served to confound the general improvement of nature with the operations of gardening. Sir Walter Scott, who is of high authority on this point, makes the following remarks in the Quarterly Review: "This art is unfortunately named. The idea of its being, after all, a variety of the gardening art, with which it has little or nothing to do, has given a mechanical turn to the whole profession, and certainly encouraged many persons to practise it, with no greater qualifications than ought to be found in a tolerably skilful gardener." Whenever a term which is applied to any art or science becomes immediately and universally misused, this is sufficient proof that the term is in itself inappropriate. One of the evils arising from the use of a term compounded of two vernacular words is that the subordinate of the pair too often rules the signification. The word *gardening* has so long been applied to certain common and definite operations, that a compound term including this as a part will necessarily suggest all these operations. The defi-

nition given to this term by Mr. Repton, who first brought it into use, is comprehensive, but not sufficiently definite and precise. "The whole art of landscape gardening," says this author, "may properly be defined the pleasing combination of art and nature, adapted to the use of man." From other pages of Mr. Repton's works, we learn that he includes architecture, sculpture, and some other arts, no less than gardening, under this general head. The art which by its name has been thus identified with gardening is so intimately connected with the other arts above named, that it would have been as proper to call it landscape architecture as landscape gardening. Indeed, it is of greater importance to the beauty of landscape, that buildings, which are prominent objects, should be in good style, and in a proper situation, than that the garden, which is comparatively inconspicuous, should be well located and arranged. A writer in the Quarterly Review remarks, that "Scott very justly finds fault with the term landscape gardening, which is a term that has proved fatal to our parterres. If such a word as *landscaping* be inadmissible, it is high time to find some phrase which will express the laying out of park scenery, as completely distinct from gardening as the things themselves are." A term, however, thus limited in its signification, would not supply the *desideratum*. A term is wanted that shall embrace all the signification attached to landscape gardening, but so compounded as that it shall not be narrowed down to signify the mere mechanical practice of one particular art. This new term should apply to all general operations for the improvement of the face of the country, including the pasture and the farm no less than the park and the garden, and having no more reference to ornament than to those fortuitous combinations of artificial and natural objects, which, without positive beauty, produce a pleasing effect on the mind. We would suggest the word *Calichthonics* (compounded of the Greek words *καλός*, *beautiful*, and *χθών*, *earth*) as an appropriate name for the science that treats of the sublime, the beautiful, and the picturesque, both in nature and art, as applied to the improvement of landscape, thus comprehending within its sphere, not gardening alone, but likewise dendrology, architecture, road-making, geognosy, and monumental sculpture.

Dendrology, or the forester's art, is embraced in this science, so far as it relates to the grouping and arrangement of trees and shrubbery for the sake of giving pleasure to the sight. Under this head are included the characteristics of individual species, their manner of growth in a forest, in a grove, or on the open plain, the aspect of their undergrowth, and their comparative value as picturesque and ornamental objects, in the forest, in the park, on the farm, by the road-side, in the garden, or in the enclosures about the dwelling-house. All that relates to trees as ornamental objects, to the beauty of their forms and foliage, to the worth of their shade and shelter, to the associations awakened by them, and to their character as subjects of poetry or painting, belongs to the treatment of landscape.

Architecture is one of the most important divisions of our science. In the language of Mr. Repton, the improver must be "acquainted with the higher requisites of the art, relating to *form*, to *proportion*, to *character*, and, above all, to *arrangement*." He needs a knowledge of all that part of architecture which relates to the effect of the different kinds and styles of buildings in landscape, and to the laws of beauty as applied to the disposition and arrangement of them, with respect to other works of art and to natural objects. His cognizance includes all dwellings, from the hovel to the palace; all edifices, from the hermitage to the cathedral; all structures, from a foot-plank across a rivulet, to the suspension-bridge across the Niagara. His scope comprehends the *morale* and the *picturesque* of architecture; while the details of construction belong to the architect as a mere builder.

Road-making also forms a branch of this science, — not indeed the mechanical construction of roads, but all that relates to their courses and directions, — everything about them which can be considered as a matter of taste. It treats of the comparative beauty of the different descriptions of roads, from the cart-path through the woods, to the highway from the city; of their different forms, as the straight and the crooked, the wide and the narrow; of their character, as the rude, the wild, the neat, the rough, and the smooth. Lastly, it relates to the planting of trees and shrubbery by the road-side,



to the style of the fences that enclose it, and to all objects that may be regarded as its appurtenances.

Geognosy or Geoscopy, the science that treats of the parts and the configuration of the earth's surface, constitutes that division of the landscape art which is usually treated under the heads of ground, rocks, and water. It treats of the inequalities of ground, — hills, plains, islands, mountains, and valleys, of the different forms of rocks, of lakes and rivers, of the sea and its branches, and of the colors of the earth and of vegetation.

Monumental Sculpture belongs in great part to the science of landscape, which is intimately concerned with the different descriptions of monuments exposed to view, whether by the road-side or in the garden, in the public square or the cemetery. All will admit that the style of a monument, erected in a conspicuous place, must seriously affect the expression of landscape; and that, especially in our rural cemeteries, it is important that a correct taste should preside over the various objects of sculpture, which are their chief and most costly ornaments.

The science of landscape is yet only in its infancy; for this must be said of every science, until its aims and ends are clearly and precisely defined, and its limits distinctly marked. It is safe to assert, that what has hitherto been written on the subject is like what is written of the geography of a country before its boundaries are known. We cannot be sure that the traveller may not be describing some parts of a neighboring province as belonging to it, or that he may not omit to describe many tracts which are properly included in it. The majority of works on landscape gardening discourse too minutely concerning the objects of the garden and the parterre, and very imperfectly concerning objects outside of the domain of cultivation. They contain rules for embellishing estates; some having particular reference to artificial structures, others to natural objects; some treating almost solely of ornament, others alluding more particularly to the expression of character, but all having more to say of gardening than of any other branch of the subject. From these works might be gathered materials for a system; but no single author has yet arranged

his topics philosophically and according to a judicious classification. The majority of writers on this subject regard the gentleman's estate as the only object of great importance, and plainly consider the general aspect of nature outside of this as of no consequence, except as it necessarily constitutes a prospect from the estate. Their rules are essentially aristocratic. They treat everything beyond the garden and the park with evident contempt; and the belt, invented by Mr. Brown, was plainly designed to isolate the nobleman's grounds from the surrounding country. We do not deny, however, that there may have been some necessity for these things in Great Britain. Whether this be true or not, the landscape art, as practised in that country, seems until of late to have been designed solely to gratify the ambition of the noble or wealthy proprietor. In accordance with these principles, and with the idea that the view of humble cottages was not consistent with the dignity of these isolated landscapes, many little hamlets were removed out of sight, and frequently to such a distance as to cause great inconvenience to the toil-worn peasantry who tenanted them. Mr. Repton, who felt some commiseration for these poor laborers, and who had sufficient benevolence to understand the value of simple cottage scenery in a landscape, as giving it a human interest, condemned this cruel practice; and by his advice, after their appearance was improved by appropriate ornaments and a better arrangement, they were allowed, in many instances, to remain.

As political economy regards the general wealth of the nation, instead of the improvement of private fortunes at the expense of the masses, in like manner should the science of landscape embrace a system of rules for improving the aspect of the whole country, and not merely for the laying out of estates and the erection of magnificent houses. We use the word *improving* instead of *ornamenting*, because the majority of operations required by this art are not to be considered as ornamental, in any sense, unless every object, however plain, that awakens an agreeable sentiment, is an ornament. To extend the meaning of a word so greatly beyond its customary limits of signification, would be an abuse of language. An old, misshapen tree, a mass of venerable ruins, a plain, un-

adorned cottage, or a huge precipice, is not an ornament; yet, in certain situations, each of these objects may add a peculiar interest to the landscape. The same may be said of many other objects that please by their expression of character, or by agreeable images associated with them. It is not the aim of this science to teach those citizens alone who have accumulated great fortunes how to construct magnificent houses, gardens, and parks, which by their splendor shall excite the admiration of the crowd. Its aid should be proffered to the poorest and most humble citizens, to awaken in their hearts certain dormant sensibilities, and to strengthen their minds with a new intelligence. By the study of these principles they will learn, that magnificence and splendor are not the only qualities that are beautiful in prospect; that there is beauty to the mind as well as to the eye; and that, amidst the pomp and glitter of pride and extravagance, the spectator often turns away unsatisfied or displeased, to view with unspeakable delight the plain cottage of a laborer, surrounded with the tokens of lowly industry and thrift. Our art has as much to do with a rustic field-path as with a gravel-walk; with a bed of wild-flowers as with a flower-garden. It seeks to regulate the wild growth of the forest, no less than to group the trees and shrubbery upon the dressed grounds of a princely estate. Many points on which certain improvers set the highest value are of little importance, except as they serve to disfigure a landscape. There are persons who seem to think that the great secret of this art consists in knowing how to carve out certain geometrical or irregular figures, constituting, in the cant phraseology of the profession, respectively the *gardenesque*, the *arabesque*, and the *picturesque* styles, according as they are more or less regular or irregular, simple or complicated. The art with such persons is reduced to a level with that of the mere calico-printer, or the designer of patterns for paper-hangings. With regard to prospect, the gravel-walk, the fence, the square enclosure, and the hedge-row are so many disagreeable lines and patches, differing from one another only in being more or less injurious to the unity and beauty of the landscape.

This last remark does not apply unqualifiedly to roads,

without which a prospect would be defective in many points of interest. The gravel-walk is suggestive only of ornament, of the garden and the pleasure-ground. Roads are suggestive of the general wants and conveniences of human life, and take from a scene or a prospect that expression of solitude which would otherwise be inseparable from it. Roads and by-ways are necessary to the completeness of a landscape, though they are not required in a picture, which is necessarily circumscribed. There are but few objects we encounter in a ramble more delightful than a green lane leading by a pleasant and devious course through a wood. Such an object is associated with the toils and the welfare of humanity, like the sight of herds and flocks. Yet, as a part of rural scenery, the less evidence a road or a path affords of its being a thoroughfare, the more picturesque and romantic is its appearance, and the more beautiful is it in the sight of the traveller. The most interesting woods are those which abound in paths to render them accessible; but it is worthy of notice, that the most interesting paths are those which were made by the farmer, or the woodman, for the convenience of labor. If these wood-paths bear evidence of having been constructed for purposes of pleasure, they please the less on this account. More especially do they fail in giving delight, if they are neatly gravelled, and evince a great deal of expensive toil.

An important department of study relates to the source of these preferences, and to the operations of the mind, by which we might explain why one particular scene affords a great deal of pleasure, while another, very similar to it, is cold in its expression, and perhaps disagreeable. These moral qualities of scenery are carefully investigated by painters, but they have been generally overlooked by artists in real landscape. One cause of the preferences to which we have alluded is undoubtedly a propensity of the human mind to be delighted with the evidences of freedom, and to dislike the signs of exclusive appropriation. Such inquiries to many may seem unimportant; but they are necessary to a correct understanding of the sources of beauty in landscape. The beauty of more than half the scenes we behold is derived from prejudices, some of which are peculiar to certain classes of men, while others

are nearly universal. The latter only are worthy of serious respect. A nobleman may be pleased with those circumstances in a landscape which afford to him a sense of his own superiority of station and of the vastness of his possessions; the same objects, however, are offensive to all the rest of mankind, except to those servile beings who sympathize only with greatness. Hence, in England, almost all improvers aim at making the grounds which they are employed to embellish express this character of exclusiveness, because they think merely of satisfying the pride of their employers. In this country, the improver should endeavor to produce the very opposite effect; because, to the majority of intelligent minds, the expression of freedom, simplicity, and a reference to the general welfare, alone is pleasing, and that of pride and exclusiveness is offensive.

It is not true that a scene must appear to be "natural," to be capable of affording pleasure; there are many scenes entirely artificial in their arrangement, that are highly delightful to the eye and the mind. Indeed, without art, nature is wanting in some of the most pleasing attributes of beautiful scenery. Without art, the earth is but a solitude and a wilderness. It is affectation, pride, selfishness, exclusiveness, and pretence which ought to be concealed; there is nothing disagreeable in the evidences of art, abstractly considered. Houses are artificial objects, but no landscape is complete or interesting without them. After all this cant about the natural and the artificial, the warmest admirer of nature must admit that a landscape is cold and inexpressive, unless it contains some work of human hands. When the works of art which we behold in any scene are so many evidences that we are trespassers or intruders, they are proportionally offensive; but if they leave us our freedom, and the consciousness of this freedom, they please us more than natural objects, because they agreeably interest the mind, while we are enjoying the beauty of the surrounding landscape.

Among the rules of practice in landscape, we find the classic canon, that "the perfection of art is to conceal art," or rather to conceal the means by which certain effects are produced. But there is gross inconsistency in the modes of car-

rying this principle into practice. It is absurd to endeavor to conceal art, while one is using the utmost of his ingenuity in the same place to make it apparent to the spectator, by certain artificial objects and arrangements, that the grounds are a part of the estate of a wealthy gentleman or nobleman. The custom was once prevalent among the landlords in Great Britain, of removing the huts and cottages of their dependents outside of the aristocratic belt, and afterwards introducing certain counterfeit objects in their place, to constitute an "Arcadian scene." Had these cottages been allowed to remain, they would have furnished a genuine Arcadian scene, which, forming a legitimate appendage to the estate, would have required no artifices to conceal design. In operations of this sort, pride is the quality that ought to be concealed, and this, unfortunately, is the very thing which the proud are most anxious to display.

Another similar species of absurdity is to affect rusticity, by the introduction of certain rude objects into a scene which is in the highest style of decorative art. Why should not one build a rough and mean cottage at once, and dwell in it, if he is so highly delighted with rusticity? It is a singular trait in human nature, that leads men thus to prefer the counterfeit to the true. Such coarse appendages to the costly works of ambition can never awaken the pleasing emotions with which we contemplate a genuine scene of rustic life, — a fisherman's hut by the side of a river, or the neat cottage of a laborer, surrounded by the wild scenery of nature.

There is no other art in the theory and practice of which may be found a greater number of inconsistencies, than in this modern art of improving landscape. Its practitioners embellish the forest, and rusticize the garden; they add filigree ornaments to a genuine rude cottage, and annex rustic appendages to a magnificent villa. To be consistent in their absurdities, they should introduce the plain rush-bottomed chairs of the laborer's hut into the gilded saloons of a palace, and suspend golden chandeliers from the rough-hewn beams in the kitchen of a log-cabin. It is not in the power of art to blend these opposites harmoniously. Nature alone can successfully rear, side by side with the rude rock, the loveliest

works of her creation, without discord, and combine incongruous forms, without awakening in the mind of the beholder a feeling of aversion. Such attempts may probably have been suggested by the practice of carving rustic devices upon elegant works of art. These representations are often very beautiful, and in keeping with the highest style of embellishment. But to carve upon the entablature of a porch certain rude devices, and to take for the columns of this porch rude stumps of trees, rough from the woods, are two very different things.

Another kind of affectation, which is still more prevalent in this country, is that of making a cheap house wear the appearance of a costly mansion, thus attempting to convey the impression of a state of affluence on the part of the proprietor, which does not exist. By so doing one reverses the rule of good taste, — that no expectations should be raised above the point to which they can be gratified. This rule is violated, first, when, by the distant view of the house, the spectator is disappointed on a near inspection of it; secondly, when, by the external character of the house, the spectator is disappointed at the comparative meanness of style in the interior; and lastly, when, by the general appearance of the whole, the visitor is disappointed at the inferior manners of the owner and his family, at their poverty of resources, or at the want of correspondence between the grandeur of the house and grounds, and the proprietor's unsocial, coarse, and vulgar mode of living and receiving company. It is a false ambition which causes one to make his own low-breeding and slender education the more conspicuous, by placing it in contrast with the princely style of his dwelling.

But while these contrasts are always offensive, and the signs of actual wealth, when unconnected with refinement, can excite no higher emotion than envy, the evident affectation of wealth by one who does not possess it fails even of this mark, and elicits only contempt. So far do some men carry this kind of folly, that in many cases we have witnessed the assumption of a pride which was really no part of the character of the vain but innocent proprietor. On account of the general custom of neglecting the rules of consistency and propriety, landscape

gains less from expensive and showy houses than their owners are apt to imagine. A good taste would always select such styles of building for the wealthy as exhibit elegance without ostentation, and for persons of moderate fortune such styles as are pleasing and beautiful, without any signs of the foolish imitation of superior houses. An ambitious man is guilty of extreme folly, when he cramps his means of hospitality by spending his whole fortune upon a house which, from its spaciousness, the number, variety, and arrangement of its rooms, and its general magnificence, seems to be designed for purposes of hospitality alone. If he be truly a man of generous and social feelings, he must suffer continual chagrin by perceiving his inability to fulfil the expectations authorized by the imposing appearances displayed under his own roof.

It is a commonplace remark, that everything is great or small only by comparison. This is no more true, than that everything is beautiful, in the ornamental signification of the word, only by comparison. The impression made upon the mind by a splendid work of art depends greatly upon the habits of the observer,—upon his having been accustomed to more humble or more superb objects of the same sort. This principle may be applied equally to architecture and to dress; and hence the necessity of going every year further toward extremes in extravagance. It will apply to all objects of beauty whose influence depends on the amount of stimulus they apply to the organs of sight. No sooner has the public become familiar with an example which is more splendid than any previous one, than all former examples seem inferior or insignificant. A constant familiarity with gaudy displays in the works of any art, destroys one's power to be affected by creations of the same art which are inferior in dazzling qualities; and we can imagine this sort of extravagance to be carried so far as to render external gilding in architecture necessary to make any impression on the public sight.

But there is another kind of beauty which is not affected by comparison. It is that which awakens in the mind an agreeable sentiment, and depends for its influence on the expression of some pleasing trait of character, and not on a certain stimulus applied to the visual organs. The



charm of the appropriate dwelling of a happy and industrious citizen in humble life, depends on the benevolent trains of thought which it starts in the mind. The proximity of a splendid edifice does not weaken its effect, as it would weaken that of an inferior, ostentatious dwelling, because its beauty is of a kind that evades unfavorable comparison. The same may be said of all those dwellings whose peculiar charm is their suggestiveness of some agreeable poetic, social, or romantic image. This is the kind of beauty which every wise man, whose object is to be happy, and not to dazzle and astonish the crowd, will choose,—beauty that consists in the expression of thought and feeling.

The influence of mere ornament upon the happiness of a people is quite opposite to that which is usually attributed to it. A love of the beautiful constitutes a habit of the mind which has been greatly extolled. But a love of the beautiful, in the vulgar sense of agreeable stimulus applied to the organs of sight, is liable to be carried to a very injurious excess. By cultivating a taste for ornamental architecture, and by living in the midst of highly decorated houses, and in splendid apartments, one becomes so perverted by their dazzling effects as to despise simplicity, and dead to impressions of any kind which are less stimulating to the perceptive faculties. Luxury in architecture, with respect to our private dwellings, may become as injurious a vice as luxury in dress, or in eating and drinking. The one destroys our physical capacity to enjoy the gifts of nature for our refreshment, the other destroys our ability to be affected by scenes that yield pleasure to persons equally cultivated, who are accustomed to plainness and simplicity.

These remarks are equally applicable to the luxury of superb and highly ornamented gardens. Those who are in the constant habit of frequenting them, lose their power of enjoying the simple scenes of nature. There is some difficulty in determining the bounds between healthful indulgence and voluptuous excess; but it seems to us a moral duty to keep our feelings alive to all impressions of simple beauty, by avoiding extremes in luxurious and costly displays. We cannot have too much of nature in its simplicity, nor too

much of art, when it is employed to afford rational pleasure to the mind, instead of an intoxicating stimulus to the senses, or a flattering unction to the pride. By studying the forms and the harmonies of nature, and the rules and principles of art, we increase our susceptibility to enjoyment; but the opposite effect is produced by a general emulation, on the part of the citizens, to outvie one another in the costly splendor of their houses and grounds.

No error is more common, than to mistake the evidences of fashion for those of taste, — unless it be to overlook the close connection that exists between fashion and vulgarity. No man can possess taste, without either a superior intellect or a superior education; but the veriest blockhead can appreciate the value of fashion, and adapt himself to its requisitions. The first idea that enters into the head of a vulgar-minded man, upon attaining wealth, is to build an ostentatious house, and to destroy every appearance of nature about his grounds. He becomes a man of fashion, which is the governing principle of all who are both ignorant and vain. The consequence that often follows this architectural mania, is that of crippling one's self for life in his pecuniary circumstances. In former times, when these showy houses were less common, they were designated as "follies." They are too often the monuments erected over the grave of one's fortune.

The works of nature are no less subject to injury from profuse embellishment, than the works of art. It cannot be denied, that, in the majority of cases in which an old farm and farm-house have passed into the hands of a wealthy proprietor, to be converted into a country seat, the attractions of the place, in the eyes of a man of taste and sensibility, are spoiled. It is worthy of serious study to find out the cause of this misfortune. The beauty of a farm depends in a great measure on certain appearances of rusticity, combined with neatness, and the evidences of industry and good cultivation. But it is not necessary to this desirable appearance, that the grounds should be made entirely smooth and ornamental. To change the cart-paths into gravel-walks; to place hedge-rows in the place of rude stone-walls; to root

up every straggling bush and brier in the pasture-land ; and to destroy the spontaneous growths of shrubbery that diversify the grounds, would add nothing to their attractiveness. Were the vines, bushes, and thorns to be cleared from each side of every fence and stone-wall, there would be a sort of presumptive evidence of care and good husbandry. But the latter may exist in perfection where this description of work has been entirely omitted ; because there is no advantage in it, except in a garden, or where the space occupied by these natural objects is needed for cultivation.

We have seen on a farm the most admirable neatness and good culture, unconnected with any of this grubbing and clearing which we have just described. On this farm the fields were separated by loose stone-walls, neatly laid without masonry. On each side of the walls, covering a space of about two feet in width, was a beautiful miscellaneous growth of vines and shrubbery. The delicate wild-flowers of spring peeped out from the green turf in this border, and the gaudy blossoms of autumn nodded their plumes of purple, yellow, and lilac over the tops of the walls. Often in the heart of a mowing field might be seen a mass of shrubbery surrounding a tree, or a group of trees which had been left standing on a barren knoll. In all parts of the farm were similar wooded tracts of wild and spontaneous growth. Vines were often suffered to wreath themselves around a projecting rock, that raised its head in the midst of a ploughed field, and caused an interruption in the regular planting of the crops. All these circumstances might be considered proofs of a want of neatness and thrift. But a more attentive observation would, amidst all this apparent negligence, discover the real evidences of good farming. The owner of this farm believed it to be more necessary to economize labor, which is expensive, than land, which is abundant and cheap. If a growth of trees and shrubbery had covered a barren knoll, or a cluster of vines had twined itself around a rock, neither of which could produce anything more valuable, he wisely left them to adorn his fields and to add variety to the landscape. The proofs of his thrift were to be seen in those parts of his farm that were devoted to tillage. Here the

soil was in the most prosperous condition, and though the wild shrubbery grew under the walls, half concealing them by the profusion of its flowers and verdure, and adding to the scene a beauty which nothing else could so well yield, yet there was no unsightly growth of weeds among his crops, which were all healthy and luxuriant, and there was no evidence of neglect except where neglect was wisdom. The owner regarded all these rustic appearances as an important part of the genuine attractiveness of the landscape. He looked upon the vines that graced his walls not as weeds and a cumbrance of the ground. They were the rustic ornaments of his farm, that served to regale his sight when he was employed in the labors of the field, and to allure and harbor the birds, who were both his servants and his musicians. Any system of improvement that required the destruction of these objects he justly regarded as devastation. The chief aim of the improver should be to prevent this sort of outrage upon Nature. The omission to do anything at all for adorning the face of the country is better than to deprive Nature of these ornaments, which are her genuine features, and with which are associated some of our most pleasing images of rural life.

These native ornaments, especially trees, are more apt to be preserved when the old farm is distant from a large market, which usually creates a demand for wood, and causes all the farms in its vicinity to be laid bare of their groves and forests. Since the country has been girdled with railroads, many of these picturesque farms have lost all their former beauty, and others which are now so many little Edens in the landscape are destined within a few years to be equally spoiled and laid waste. The railroads are inflicting upon this country, by the destruction of its forests, a curse which we fear will more than balance the benefits they have conferred, and which, without some legislative interference, will end in universal drought and devastation, making the country an arid desert, and depriving our posterity both of wood and water.

By many writers on landscape improvements, the farm is considered an unfit subject for the exercise of their art, because it does not admit of embellishment in the usual

acceptation of this term. Further objections are made, on the supposition that the farm and its appurtenances are injurious to the beauty of landscape. As a farm is necessarily laid out in divisions approaching more or less to the form of a square, and as the grounds must in most cases be planted in straight lines, it is contended that there can be nothing picturesque in its appearance, and that it ought, therefore, to be excluded from the domain of the "improver." Others take a different position, and contend for the practice of laying out the fields in what they are pleased to call "picturesque" forms, of grouping the trees in the orchards, and hiding the crops by plantations of wood and other screens. We differ entirely from each of these parties, and consider all that reasoning fallacious which maintains that right lines and angles, and fields laid out in squares, are incompatible with the sort of beauty which is called picturesque.

It is admitted by all, that a house may be an agreeable and picturesque object in a landscape, notwithstanding its straight lines, right angles, and flat surfaces, because we know such mathematical forms to be in character with the house. Why then should the same lines and angles, drawn with less mathematical precision, be considered offensive in the aspect of a farm, when we know that they are equally in character with it, and that any other lines or angles would be out of character. The pleasure we derive from landscape depends entirely on its expression of those ideas and images which are agreeable to the mind and appropriate to the scene. When we are looking for rustic simplicity, we are offended if we see only affectation and pretence; when we are looking for grandeur, we are offended if we see only its counterfeit. When we are looking at a farm, we wish to behold certain objects and appearances which necessarily belong to it, and which in their charming perfection would, in the eyes of a philanthropist, elevate a true farm as high in the scale of landscape beauty as the isolated estate of a prince or a nobleman.

All these notions about a certain "line of beauty" are but the whims of theorists. It would be easy to show that straight lines and right angles are an essential part of the beauty of a farm, and that without them there would be noth-

ing to remind us of its character. Any attempt at the grouping of its objects would be attended with ludicrous effects, and an endeavor to conceal the real nature of a farm under the disguise of something that resembles park scenery, would be still more ridiculous. A *ferme ornée*, in our opinion, would be a monstrosity; and yet we believe a farm might consistently be made one of the most beautiful features in the landscape, by clothing it in its native and appropriate rustic ornaments. In looking from an eminence down upon a fertile valley, which is divided into irregular squares, and exhibits that pleasing diversity of colors which arises from the nature of the different crops, is any observer offended by the artificial appearance of the scene? On the contrary, the particular forms and hues of these fields, how much soever they may resemble a chess-board, are suggestive of many delightful trains of thought. Such evidences of industry, plenty, and tranquillity, and of the easy and happy circumstances of the human beings who are occupied on the farm, make it both picturesque and beautiful, and even sublime, if such a view could be sufficiently extended.

Were these fields subdivided too minutely, they would cease to be pleasing, because they would suggest the idea of a minute subdivision of property among contending heirs. No man could believe that such minute partitions of land are among the requisitions of agriculture. But can any one suppose that a designed irregularity in the shapes of these fields, graceful curves or zigzags in the paths and fences, would render them more pleasing or *picturesque*? Regularity or irregularity is pleasing or displeasing, as it seems to answer in the best manner the purpose to which the land is devoted. There are certain forms and arrangements that are appropriate to the garden, others that belong respectively to the park, to the farm, and to the rude scenes of nature. All these should remain distinct, and the forms identified with any one of these should not be forced into another. But it is a mistake to suppose that the beauty of landscape would be seriously injured by the lines and angles that belong to the garden and the farm.

Our preceding remarks naturally lead us to consider the

meaning of that much abused and misused term,—*picturesque*. There are but few writers who use it alike, or who connect it with any definite idea. But its signification is usually confined to a particular class of objects, usually to such as are rude, rough, wild, and irregular. We shall endeavor to show that it is a relative term, and that the reasons for thus limiting its signification are fallacious;—that an object may possess any or all of the above-named qualities, and not be picturesque, or may possess this character without any one of these qualities.

The word *picturesque*, as originally used, was undoubtedly applied only to those scenes and objects which, on account of their peculiar arrangement of parts, their distance, middle distance, and foreground, their breadth of light and shade, and expression of character, were adapted to the painter's art. Hence, when it was first incorporated in our language, it must have been employed to characterize only very limited scenes or groups, whether in art or nature. As the word came into more general use, its signification was extended; and when applied to landscape, it was not confined to scenes of such narrow dimensions as would enter easily into a picture, but used concerning any range of scenery combining that sort of unity and variety, those lights and shadows and expressions, which, if within narrower limits, would please the eye of a painter, and be applicable to his uses. As painters of landscapes were generally in the habit of representing rude and rough scenes and objects, grounds that had not been dressed and ornamented, simple cottages rather than villas and palaces, and ruins rather than buildings in a perfect condition, the word, in popular use, came to be more particularly applied to these ruder types of scenery, rather than to highly cultivated landscape, grounds with smooth and flowing surface, or costly and elegant buildings. But if we examine the subject by a careful analysis, we shall discover that the former are not the only kinds of scenes and objects which are capable of being successfully represented on canvas. The rude parts of landscape, it will not be denied, are more commonly picturesque than such as have been smoothed and embellished by the hand of man, because Nature does not, so often as man, introduce

offensive and discordant objects into her scenes. This fact, however, does not prove that the highly ornamented works of art cannot be made picturesque; it proves only that, in the majority of cases, the hand of art is not guided by genius. A painter of genius could easily invent a highly ornamented scene, that should exhibit all those interesting properties which are delightful in a picture. But it is difficult to find such scenes in real landscape; and the majority of painters, like the majority of other artists, not having this *mens divini*or, are obliged to select such scenes as nature and accident afford them, requiring no modification from their hands to fit them for their use. These ready-made picturesque scenes and objects are almost invariably simple and rude. A higher gift is required to enable a painter to compose a picture of artificial splendor, which, without offending by any sinister expression, shall exhibit all those admirable qualities which are necessary to constitute a pleasing scene on canvas or in landscape. While true genius delights in painting simple and rude scenes, mediocrity is safe in attempting those only. For this reason there are hundreds of pictures of this description to one picture of combined elegance and grandeur, because the latter can be well executed only by the hand of a master. In producing a magnificent composition of art, the painter must not only be under the guidance of genius, but he must also possess a general and liberal knowledge of the principles of harmony in form. It may be further remarked, that the difficulty of making a scene picturesque is proportional to the number of objects to be combined, and the consequent multiplicity of sentiments and associations awakened by them, because this complexity of parts increases the liability of introducing a false or incongruous object, by which the intended effect may be greatly injured or destroyed.

The picturesque, in the abstract, is any quality in a scene or an object which, through the medium of the sight, awakens an agreeable emotion in the mind, independently of any intrinsic beauty it may possess or want; and a picturesque scene or object is one in which all parts unite in producing this agreeable action upon the mind of the beholder. There may be several objects in a composition that possess this



character, and yet the whole may be wanting in it, on account of the presence of certain discordant parts. The scene must be entirely unique and harmonious, uncombined with anything that would interrupt the agreeable emotions or trains of thought that proceed from it, by suggesting others of a different or opposite character. It is from overlooking this principle, that so many imitators of rustic scenes in real landscape fail in their attempt, because their vanity causes them to introduce certain ornaments which are incompatible with its simplicity. No matter how rude or how beautiful a scene may be, whether it be smooth or rough, simple or complicated, if it has a certain breadth of light and shade and unity of parts, and awakens in all susceptible minds an agreeable sentiment or emotion, it is picturesque.

Let us now briefly consider the application of this term to individual objects. It is thought that a house cannot exhibit this character, unless it is considerably varied in its outlines, and has a great variety of parts. This may be true of a house standing isolated from all other objects; but if it be plain and simple in its construction, and wanting in this variety, the necessary expression may be given to it by certain accompaniments, adjacent to it, yet not forming a part of it. It is readily admitted, that, of two houses standing in vacant space, the one that exhibits a pleasing variety of outline, other things being equal, is more picturesque than the other, which is plain and square. But by a judicious assemblage of objects, artificial and natural, about this square house, it may be made as interesting, either in a landscape or in a picture, as a house of varied architectural members and outlines. It is the part of wisdom, therefore, to build one's house in that particular shape which is required by economy, utility, and convenience, though it be a plain cube, and then to make it picturesque by its adjuncts and surroundings.

A rough, square, and barn-like house, without any appendages, standing alone on a dead level, awakens no agreeable or poetic sentiments. Let us consider what must be added, to impart to it this desirable charm. A chimney would yield something of this expression, by suggesting the idea of fire-side comforts within. Windows would yield to it other evi-

dences of convenience, of light, of prospect, and of social enjoyment. Afterwards, by affixing certain projections, wings, vestibules, and piazzas, under different roofs, and showing by these external appendages the presence of certain needful accommodations, within and without, we increase still more this agreeable expression. In proportion as, by enlarging the variety of these suggestive appurtenances, we multiply the number of pleasing images of comfort, convenience, cheerfulness, and hospitality, or any other agreeable ideas awakened by them, we render the house more and more picturesque, until by an excess of variety we create confusion in the mind of the beholder.

It is highly necessary to understand the importance of these circumstances, which serve to add force, beauty, and character to a scene, and to know that the expression of a plain house depends more upon surrounding objects, than on any architectural ornaments that can be added to it. We would not deny the force of such agreeable adjuncts, but contend that nearly all desirable effects may be produced without them; and if our opinion be correct, the principle asserted is important to those who are obliged to be governed by a rigid economy. Almost all American writers treat of the picturesque, as if it were an intrinsic quality of certain objects; and they do not seem to understand that it is only a relative term. Hence they speak of some trees as having this character, and of others as wanting it; now attributing it to the coniferous trees, then to those trees only which are disfigured, shattered, or of an anomalous shape, and invariably denying that it can appertain to trees which are round-headed, beautiful, or graceful. Yet there is in truth no particular shape or color, except from association, that renders a tree or a house picturesque, but each may become so, according as it harmonizes with any pleasing scene with which it is combined.

This quality in a tree, as well as in any other object, depends on its power of conveying a distinct and vivid impression of an agreeable nature to the mind, either by being itself an image or an emblem of some poetic sentiment, as in the case of an ancient patriarchal oak, or by assisting to heighten the poetic character of a scene of which it is a part. Thus

the pyramidal firs would be picturesque in rough, wintry, and mountainous situations, by adding wildness to the scenery and being in harmony with it. But they do not deserve, on this account, to be distinguished by this epithet, since they lose all this character in other kinds of scenery. If the larch and the fir are picturesque in mountainous and wintry landscapes, the weeping-willow is no less so, when standing on a green savannah, and overhanging the widening of a natural stream, with a neat cottage included in the same picture. The willow has this character, under these circumstances, because it adds to the peaceful and romantic expression of the scene, with its long branches dipping into the water, as the larch and the fir add force to natural wildness and ruggedness.

Nearly all this confusion of ideas has arisen from the general practice of using a *relative* term as if it were *specific*. We may say of a certain tree, that it is noble or magnificent; of another, that it is graceful; of another, that it is rugged, knotted, and gnarled; and our meaning is understood. But if we say of a tree, that it is picturesque, are there two persons living to whom the term thus used would convey the same idea? If this epithet should be applied specifically to any particular trees, it belongs to those which have been consecrated to certain interesting uses by poets, by the sacred and classical writers, and more especially by painters. An old tree of any species, of grand and ample dimensions, partially decayed, is highly suggestive in a picture or in a landscape, because it forms a pleasing patriarchal image, and is allied with the sentiment of ruin. A knotted and gnarled oak has this expression, because it is a symbol of fortitude, and emblematical of the successful resistance of power. Had we seen the beech-tree in pictures as often as we have read of it in the poets, it would have been as picturesque as it is now poetical.

It is common among writers, when comparing the English and American elms, to speak of the latter as more beautiful, and the former as more picturesque. This distinction is made on the assumption that the two qualities are incompatible. How, then, has it happened that the ash, one of the most beautiful and graceful of all trees, is called, by way of

distinction, "the painter's tree," and that the most picturesque houses, being such as exhibit the most agreeable variety of outlines, are likewise the most beautiful? No assumption can be more entirely unfounded, as these two qualities always assist and heighten each other, when they are in combination. Neither the beautiful nor its opposite is incompatible with the picturesque. We are all familiar with those old-fashioned farm-houses, built about a century ago, with two stories in front, and a long roof sloping down to one story behind. We ask if anything in landscape can be more picturesque, in the eyes of one born and educated in the New England States, than a scene containing a graceful American elm, bending over one of these old houses, and standing upon a grassy elevation, surrounded by all the suggestive appurtenances of a rustic farm-yard. Here is a beautiful tree, combined with a very plain and homely house; yet both are equally necessary to the picture. Add to the most beautiful or the most homely scene something that gives it a poetic expression, and it immediately becomes picturesque. When a tree of magnificent proportions has become old, or a noble edifice has sunk into a ruin, each has acquired a poetic interest, and has become picturesque by the change. Add to any object whatever a similar poetic expression, by any other change, — as by leading a natural stream through an uninteresting piece of ground, by covering a bare rock with evergreen ferns and club-mosses, or by wreathing a plain cottage with a profusion of vines, — we produce a similar effect. As the chemist, by combining the same elements in a different manner, may produce a compound that is wholesome or poisonous, agreeable or nauseous, so may the artist arrange the same objects in different combinations, so as to produce successively an offensive, an insipid, a ridiculous, or a delightful picture.

Let us now inquire to what extent, and in what manner, the science of landscape concerns our American people. It must strike every intelligent observer at once, that the circumstances of the United States are widely different from those of Great Britain, where the landscape art originated. The general principles established by English writers on this sub-

ject are in many cases entirely inapplicable to this country. The land of Great Britain is in the possession of about thirty-two thousand proprietors, averaging over two thousand acres each, some having estates containing more than one hundred thousand acres. Hence the English treatises on this art are essentially aristocratic, and dwell emphatically on the importance of "appropriation," — a term used to express a uniform style of objects, that shall enable the stranger to recognize the whole estate as belonging to one individual. An entire "riding" may be the property of one lord, and it may extend several miles through his own estate. This must be distinguished from common roads, "to extend the idea of a seat, and appropriate the whole country to the mansion." The riding must be marked by certain peculiar appearances, such as plantations of trees that differ from the common trees of the country, so that they shall be "immediately received as evidences of the domain." All such management would be idle in this country; and, except in some extraordinary cases, it could serve but to show the narrow limits of one's estate. The only way to make pleasant ridings, in this land of cottages and small farms, is to encourage the people to preserve the trees and shrubbery on all barren hills and eminences, and to cultivate the valleys; for every riding of more than a mile in extent must necessarily pass through the property of several individuals. Our people should be governed by a republican feeling, and not endeavor to distinguish their own grounds from those around them, for the vain purpose of indicating the extent of their domains, but should strive, as far as it is compatible with their own superior cultivation, to make their grounds harmonize with all adjacent scenery. The whole system of improvements in Great Britain is based upon the assumption, that the gentleman's estate is the only object that concerns it; and the general aspect of the country occupies but a small share of attention. The farm is by many practitioners of this art regarded with contempt, and, if it were possible, they would remove it out of sight, as they do the kitchen garden. In this country the farm is the most important object that can occupy the attention of improvers; and gentlemen's estates, though requiring a different style of

embellishment, are not to be regarded as more important than laborers' cottages.

In our land, the idea of a park, except in some extraordinary cases, is preposterous. The pasture is the American's park, and in this it would be pleasing to preserve, to the fullest practicable extent, the character of nature and rusticity. In England the landlord is a nobleman, and the farmer is his tenant; in this country, the landlord is himself the farmer, in the majority of cases. Hence the rules of art that are applicable to the landscape in Great Britain are often entirely inapplicable to American landscape. The equal distribution of property in this country must render the more magnificent efforts of art, except in large cities, generally unattainable by the wealth of private individuals. A true patriot would not wish to alter this state of things; and, when engaged in the discussion of a question like the present, he must establish his principles on this political ground. Hence, though we believe that the United States might surpass every other nation in the theory and practice of the landscape art, we see plainly that its grand results must be produced by the mutual understanding and co-operation of all classes of the people.

Highly ornamental work, which is necessarily expensive, whether applied to buildings or to grounds, can be properly performed only by the wealthy; for any attempt that falls short of the grandeur and elegance of the model, comes under the head of pretence, and is ridiculous just in proportion to the distance between the model and the imitation. The science of landscape should inculcate such principles as, if generally understood, would cause the people to prefer the successful copy of pleasing mediocrity, to a vain attempt to imitate a superior style, which, with their pecuniary ability, could only be counterfeited. There is no fondness of distinction more absurd, than that kind of vanity which prompts one, that he may surpass his neighbor's silver, to gild his own brass; and it is a serious offence against good taste to cause a house, a garden, or a farm to appear to be what it is not, or to deck it with ornaments which, in the minds of the cultivated and intelligent, are associated with very different objects. It is equally unwise to commence a system of operations,

with a house and grounds, built and laid out in a superior style of decoration, that can be maintained only at a continual expense plainly beyond the ability of the owner.

These considerations afford no good reason for believing that the science of improvements should not form a study for the American people, as well as for the landlords of Great Britain. On the contrary, in our land it is the concern of the people, not of an aristocracy; and as there are more substantial land-owners here than in any other country, there are more persons, in proportion to the population, who are immediately interested in the art. One important result of an extended diffusion of this kind of knowledge would be to check the present rage for ostentatious and expensive embellishments, and to render the people better satisfied with a humble and modest appearance, and ambitious to conform the style of their houses and grounds to the principles of that higher beauty which is the expression and the evidence of happiness. All those books, or lectures, or examples, that are calculated to inspire men with a passion for a style of decoration that does not comport with their circumstances, are directly at war with the true principles of our art. We believe that the perusal of the majority of works on landscape-gardening that have issued from the English press is hurtful, by affecting the mind of the reader with an ambition to imitate the unattainable grandeur of foreign models, or with despair of doing anything. We see this evil influence, in all parts of our land, in the numerous unsuccessful attempts to accomplish, on a small scale, certain works in gardening and architecture, which are ridiculous except on a fitting scale of magnificence. As we live in a republic, our rules for the improvement of landscape must be republican; and the less we copy the examples which are exhibited to us in a foreign land, and the more we govern our practice by general principles, the more useful and delightful will be the result. It would be no great gain to the beauty of the country, that a few rich men had fine gardens and estates, laid out in a costly style of decoration, if the principles of this art were neglected by all the rest of the community.

But we must not omit to take into consideration the fact

that this country is at present, as compared with Europe, very extensively wooded, and that the formation of pleasing landscapes must depend more on the manner of clearing than of planting. Although the original growth of the forest cannot be used with so much advantage as the second and more sparse growth, yet there are frequent occasions when a correct taste, and a liberal comprehension of what is to be done, would direct the labors of the woodman so as to produce the most important results, with respect both to economy and landscape beauty. It must be very unpleasant to the feelings of an intelligent citizen to discover, after the completion of certain operations, that he has done a serious injury to the landscape, and has innocently incurred the censure of the community, when a little study of the sources of beauty in landscape would have taught him to avoid his error, and, with equal advantage to his interest, have enabled him to improve the general features of the scenery around him. The advantage of these operations is not confined to the individual who performs them. It extends to the whole community; for such is the intimate connection between the beauty of landscape and the prosperity of agriculture, that each requires nearly the same disposal of the most important ornaments of the face of nature,—trees and shrubbery. How many instances are of daily occurrence, in which a noble tree in a fine situation, a beautiful mass of wild shrubbery, a group of trees with their underwood, or even a knoll of wild-flowers, growing in a spot too barren to be worthy of cultivation, might have been saved, had the owner but learned to feel the value of such objects in the landscape! It is a fatal mistake to suppose that every spot that is covered with wild shrubbery is lost to agriculture. Every tree and every bush that grows on a barren elevation, besides clothing it with beauty, yields its tribute of moisture to the atmosphere and its annual crop of foliage for the pasture, affords a harbor to useful birds, protects the farm from winds and storms, and contributes its humble influence in increasing the salubrity of the atmosphere about our homes. A moderate knowledge of the advantages of these picturesque objects, as sources both of benefit to the farm and of beauty to the landscape, would lead every farmer to save them, and



to encourage their growth, especially on all wastes and barren hills. And to say nothing of the other advantages connected with the preservation of these objects, how necessary is it, in these days of commerce, when trade, which is the only source of rapid accumulation, offers the strongest temptations to young men to quit the farm for commercial pursuits,—how necessary is it to spare no pains nor study to render everything about the farm so attractive as to bind men's affections as much as possible to their own paternal acres!

But it is not by encouraging a profusion of ornament and expensive decoration, that this desirable end must be accomplished. Those objects which have been dignified with the name of ornaments are not the most pleasing things in a landscape. The embellishments which are the most costly are commonly the least pleasing to a man of feeling and taste; and the poor man should be made to feel and understand, that there is a way of decorating his grounds which is attended with no expense beyond his own moderate ability. He should learn to make his fields, pastures, and enclosures delightful, by the careful preservation of all natural and accidental beauties. We would recommend but little planting for mere decoration, without reference to utility; but we believe there is a closer connection between utility and beauty than is generally admitted. There are many parts of every man's grounds, if he owns more than two or three acres, where trees would be more valuable, as well as more ornamental, than anything else. In these places, and in these alone, let his trees be planted. There are certain tracts that ought, for purposes of economy, to be always covered with wood. It would be absurd to leave such places uncovered, and to plant trees where they would be unprofitable. In all cases, the general considerations of shade, shelter, and protection should be prior to those of ornament. We would willingly guarantee the pleasing effects which would follow from this rule of planting. Roads and enclosures must be planted for shade; the northern boundaries of farms and estates, for protection; the tops of hills and rude eminences must be wooded, for economy and for the improvement of climate; and sandy wastes must be covered with trees, to render them

available for the use of man. Let these considerations govern the planter and the pioneer, and with respect to ornamental appearances the result cannot be far from pleasing.

One highly important circumstance that concerns the Americans, is the style and extent of their public grounds. In these there is an opportunity for a display of grandeur and magnificence that would not accord with the simplicity that should characterize our private residences. In regard to these matters, however, there has been an unfortunate apathy in the general mind; and the quantity of land devoted to such purposes has been as small as if the public domain were measured by the inch, and not by the acre. Hence many public squares, or commons, in our towns and cities, that might have been made spacious and beautiful, are now contracted and bald, and so narrow as to afford but little convenience to the public, except as market-places. The necessity of spaciousness in these public grounds could not be apparent to our ancestors, who, being surrounded with a vast unoccupied territory, perceived that such conveniences were not needful to their circumstances. But no such apology can be made for the present neglect. Our public grounds deserve as much consideration as the public buildings. Every new city and town should appropriate a large tract, to be planted with trees and to be used for recreation; and the grounds connected with our school-houses, town-houses, hospitals, and other public institutions, should be no longer confined to the space of a few square rods.

In the narrow limits of this article, it cannot be expected that we should treat minutely of the style in which these grounds should be laid out and embellished. We can only dwell on the importance of making them ample, and of considering them as an indispensable provision, not only for every city, but for every village in the country. The directors of private corporations are more generally disposed to regard these matters with a favorable eye, than the officers of a town. This difference probably arises from the comparatively superior mental culture of the former. Hence there are gardens and groves attached to almost all our academies and colleges, while the town school-houses stand on a naked enclosure of a

few rods. The grounds connected with these institutions are not liable to be planned on too magnificent a scale, and committees who have the management of them are more likely to err in the small quantity of land they devote to such purposes, than in the manner of laying them out, and the style of their embellishments. We would recommend no affected imitation of what are called picturesque styles; for in all places which are to be used more or less for public resort, artificial forms and arrangements should predominate. Notwithstanding all that has been said of the want of taste displayed in the arrangements on the Boston Common, we do not believe they could have been improved by any affected irregularity in the forms of the paths and the disposition of the trees. The heart of the city is no place for an imitation of the wildness of nature. We believe, however, that all these operations would be performed nearly enough in the right way, if the public could but be animated with a general enthusiasm in favor of such improvements.

In regard to the style of our dwelling-houses and private grounds, we are unfortunately almost entirely under the influence of British taste and examples. It would be well if we could imitate them in our public grounds, where they are deserving of imitation, and where successful imitation is within our reach. In our general improvements, and in embellishing our private estates, our copying of foreign models has been unwise, and often ridiculous, and it is time that some competent person should put forth in a general treatise those principles which are applicable to our own land. Many essays, and some volumes, have been published, in nearly all of which we perceive that the authors were guided or materially influenced by English opinions. Their rules and principles are modified, in a greater or less degree, to suit our peculiar circumstances. But the art, as practised in the United States, should be entirely divorced from the English system, which ought not to be a pattern for us, unless we also adopt the constitution of Great Britain and all its aristocratic customs.

As a work which is comparatively free from these objections, we commend the volume of Messrs. Cleaveland and

Backus, entitled "Village and Farm Cottages." It contains chapters on "The House considered in its Influence on the Occupants"; "The Value of a Permanent Home"; "Home in the Country"; "The Village"; "The Choice of a Lot"; "The Adoption of a Plan"; and "Principles as applied to Details"; besides a variety of plans for cottages, well executed and designed. For their general remarks they have made an excellent choice of subjects, which are treated with great good sense and a just appreciation of the wants of those to whom they are addressed. We have read no other American publication that discusses these topics in so practical a manner, and at the same time with so much correct taste and chastened enthusiasm. The "Hints on Construction" and "On the Improvement of Grounds" are equally valuable.

The practical hints contained in this volume are well adapted to the circumstances and habits of our people, not overlooking the importance of economy in building, to persons of moderate wealth. This country is not destined to be a land of mansions and palaces. We have but few owners of whole counties and townships; and our farms of the largest size are small compared with those of average size in Europe. We live in a land of cottages and small farms; and the principles of taste are therefore particularly important in the United States, where a large proportion of the inhabitants are land-owners and cultivators. The treatise on "Village and Farm Cottages" is well calculated to cherish that sort of taste which would increase the happiness of the people, by making them contented with a humble home, surrounded by the agreeable accessories of pleasant gardens, woods, orchards, and green fields.

With regard to the style which one should adopt in laying out his garden or his pleasure-grounds, which must necessarily be artificial in their character, and contracted in their dimensions, we think it at best only of secondary importance. In these cases it is well for every man to indulge his own peculiarities of taste; and we should as soon think of dictating to a lady the greater importance of a certain style of figures compared with another, for her carpet or house-paper, — whether they should be regular or irregular, or, in the lan-

guage of gardening, "arabesque," "gardenesque," or "picturesque," — as to dictate to the owner of an estate whether the style of his gardens and enclosures should be regular or irregular, with walks angular or serpentine, straight or zigzag. We consider these things mere matters of fancy, not of taste, which concerns the more important arrangement of objects that affect the general aspect of the country. The preservation of the forests on our mountains and hills; the clearing and cultivation of the fertile slopes and valleys; the covering of waste and sandy plains, stony ridges, and gravelly knolls with the verdure of trees and shrubbery, — are the circumstances on which the beauty of landscape chiefly depends, and with which the prosperity of agriculture and the welfare of man are intimately connected.

One of the most dangerous liabilities to which the general beauty of nature is exposed, arises from the prevalence of an ambition to be considered a man of taste. When such a mania prevails, it is the ambition of men and their love of distinction, and not their taste and sensibility, which are excited. In their zeal to be thought as tasteful as their neighbors, they forget everything but the manner in which they shall make known their accomplishments to the great, admiring crowd. If, under these circumstances, one has upon his land, near his house, a beautiful clump of trees and shrubbery, of spontaneous growth, such as the Dryads, if they could be seen, would be found accepting as their own appropriate haunt, this must be all swept away, and certain exotic trees and shrubs must be planted there, because the former appearance is considered incompatible with the fashionable style of dressing grounds. But the true principles of taste would teach one that Nature should never be dressed, when her native beauties surpass any ornaments that can be put in their place; and that no scene about one's grounds, which affects the mind with a charming or tranquillizing influence, should be sacrificed for the sake of making room for some costly ornament, which, with an expression as cold as an iceberg, serves no other purpose than to answer the demands of fashion.

After witnessing all the glitter of architectural pomp, and

the gay splendor of the parterre and the pleasure-ground, the man of feeling turns away, sick and weary of the constant stimulus occasioned by these objects, to seek the tranquillity of more humble scenes, amidst the wildness of nature. Under the spreading branches of a rugged old oak, where he could muse by the side of a rustic stream, gliding in spontaneous meanderings through sedges and over pebbles, he would find more enduring satisfaction than in the proudest park or pleasure-ground. To encourage this simplicity of taste, to check any exorbitant zeal for luxury in architecture or mere ornamental gardening, and to cherish in the minds of the people a love of Nature and a sensibility to her unadorned charms, should be one of the chief aims of the American proprietor and artist.

It was our original intention to review the whole ground of gardening literature in this country; but we have already exceeded the space which we can properly use, in the discussion of the general subject. We have in years past noticed the valuable works of Mr. A. J. Downing, whose short and brilliant career of genius and enterprise has made an impression on the public mind that can never be obliterated. But among the writers on subjects connected with rural improvements, we must not omit to name Mr. Charles M. Hovey, author of "The Fruits of America," a work of rare merit and beauty, and for more than twenty years the able and persevering editor of the "Magazine of Horticulture," a periodical that embodies more practical information on this and collateral subjects than any other American journal. If Mr. Hovey, who certainly possesses talents of a high order, had been less absorbed in practical operations, and had devoted himself entirely to the literature of horticulture, we think there are but few authors who would have surpassed him in this department.